

Background

In October 2006, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) began taking steps towards applying to the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) for a specialized license plate. The plate would generate additional revenue for the SNC and would help create awareness of the need for additional investment in the Region.

A plate design has been approved and the SNC has entered into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with The Sierra Fund defining roles and responsibilities in the effort to secure 7,500 prepaid applications. Following the collection of the first application, the SNC has one year to submit the 7,500 applications.

In January 2009, the SNC addressed a meeting of several Regional stakeholders to re-evaluate the existing plan to secure 7,500 prepaid applications for license plates needed to initiate production by DMV. At this meeting an update was given outlining the growing need for the SNC to develop additional funding sources given fiscal difficulties faced by state government. The group also discussed the challenges of raising the necessary funds to conduct the campaign and the fact that three additional license plate campaigns that have or are about to commence, which could dramatically impact the market share of potential SNC plate applicants.

After assessing the challenges presented, the group agreed to develop an alternative marketing approach focused primarily at the local community level. The plan has received strong support from a number of Sierra-wide membership groups which has evolved into a functioning campaign working group. Working group members include representatives from The Sierra Fund, the Sierra Cascade Land Trust Council, the Sierra Nevada Alliance, the Sierra Business Council, Mammoth Lakes Recreation, and Mammoth Lakes Trails and Public Access. New partner organizations are committing funds and assistance rapidly.

Current Status

Paid subscriptions for license plates will be accepted beginning in mid September. Staff continues working closely with the License Plate working group to complete an aggressive media plan and marketing event schedule for the next year. A kick-off media event is being scheduled for September 2009. The plan is being populated with events scheduled across the Region and state. A further update will be provided to the Board at this meeting.

Fundraising for the campaign has been more successful during the summer yielding sufficient amounts to pay for the printing of 22,000 brochures, development of the official Web site (www.sierralicenseplate.org), and procurement of the credit card processing contract.

A complete "Partnership Kit" has been developed and is being delivered to organizations throughout the Region. The kit contains background information, graphic materials, media materials, instructions, strategies, and reporting forms necessary to implement a local license plate campaign suited to specific memberships and constituents. The kit is available on CD from The Sierra Fund.

Staff is also coordinating with other license plate initiatives to avoid media conflicts and share process information related to campaign administration.

Next Steps

Next steps will include a sustained effort to support and recognize partner organizations' progress in local campaigns, continued fundraising, and administrative duties necessary to manage the overall campaign.

Recommendation

There is no recommendation being presented at this time, however, creative comments and ideas from the Board are welcome and encouraged. Staff also strongly suggests that the Board review the Web site at www.sierralicenseplate.org.